1. Opening

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues.
Last year I let you choose from an English or a Dutch version.
Now I solve this with a question.
Who does not understand Dutch?

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,
Welcome to the New Year's Reception 2019.
Let me start by wishing everyone, also on behalf of the other members of the Executive Board, Frank Baaijens and, since January 1st, Nicole Ummelen a Happy and Prosperous 2019.
And secretly also a bit from Jo van Ham.

It will be a special year.
In 2019 there will be a lot of turbulence in the university landscape.
Open science, re-funding of the higher education system, abolishing the numerus fixus, enrolment of foreign students, English as the university language, etc.

This year is also a special year for Jo van Ham and me.
Because we have both reached retirement age, we say goodbye not only to TU/e, but also to a wonderful long career.

For Jo this has already taken effect from January 1st and for me with effect from mid-May this year
Therefore, please note in your agenda the dates March 21\textsuperscript{rst}, farewell to Jo van Ham and the opening of Atlas, and 15\textsuperscript{th} of May my farewell event.

So from now on it will be a matter of that very often heard remark, "this is the last time, that ........ .."
This also applies to this New Year's speech.
This is the last New Year's speech that I will hold, at least for TU/e.

I can already see some people thinking: "Thank God! "
Well, ...... then just prepare yourself this time!

In my career, my speeches have become shorter and shorter and I have received more and more compliments since.
I'm not going to guess at the implications of that!

Last year I gave a taste of brevity with a poem by Schiller, das Lied van der Glocke.
However, my shortest and most appreciated speech will undoubtably be.
"Houdoe en bedankt!"

But I will save it until May 15\textsuperscript{th}!!

\textbf{2. Review of the year 2018}
Let us look back a bit.
On January 5\textsuperscript{th}, 2014, Hans van Duijn, our previous rector, held his New Year's speech in this same Senate Hall.
As president-to-be, standing in a corner of this Senate hall, I was introduced to the TU/e university community.
Hans indicated how satisfied he was with the new president who would take office.
I stood there blushing in that corner, over there.

Now it is a little bit the same again.
The new chairman, Robert-Jan Smits, is not in a corner of this room, he is absent due to obligations concerning Open Science in Europe.
But I am also very pleased with such a successor who will be joining us from March 1st.

Just as pleased as I am with Nicole Ummelen who is already in office.
Nicole, welcome aboard!
Furthermore, we are also to welcome a new secretary of the university on February 1st: Suzanne van Weelden.

Before taking a bird’s eye retrospective of 2018, as with every New Year’s reception, I call on you to think about all the people in our immediate environment who died last year.
Let us never forget to remember them.

However much we can be carried away by our work, by our obligations, by the deadlines and so on.
The essence of life is life itself.
A healthy life, well-being, for sure.
The rest pales into insignificance.
Let’s not forget that.
And secondly, also on behalf Frank, Nicole, Jo and myself, thanks to everyone who has worked for our university and for all those great things of 2018.
Thank you very much for that enormous effort.

Let me refresh our memory with a few highlights from 2018 and count our blessings.
- Many wonderful academic prizes
- The completion of the reorganization around TOO
- More autonomy for the academic staff and the ius promovendi adjustments
- New Strategic Plan 2030
- MomenTUm, our new academic celebration in September
- Opening of the Matrix building and the official start of Innovation Space
- Announcement of two new, excellent members of the Executive Board
- Much positive media attention for our academics and our student teams.

Once again, our big thanks!

3. The perspective: the future

Last year I was brief about the Strategic Plan 2030, because it had not yet been finished.
Now I can be brief about it again.
Because it was published half a year ago and everyone has been able to read it.
That is why I would prefer to say something here that concerns me for the coming year.
Namely the erosion of political and public support for academic education and research!

Like all other universities, TU/e has worked incredibly hard over the years on the quality of its education and research. It is not a coincidence that all Dutch universities are in the top 200 of best universities worldwide (a total of 25,000!).

Work pressure is still a point requiring absolute attention. We will take further measures, including the removal of unnecessary internal administrative redundancy.

But we also **did** something to ease the educational burden. Namely, limit the influx of students further and increase the support in education, with dozens of teaching assistants.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science intends to make the introduction of a numerus fixus almost impossible. Within a year, in my estimation, due to a change in the law, the decentralized selection (read numerus fixus) will hardly be possible anymore. And other forms of selection are not easily possible due to Dutch or European legislation. That impedes our pursuit of quality and controlled growth. Within a year, the means to put a brake on influx will be eliminated. And more sophisticated mechanisms are precluded by law. So we will have to come up with them ourselves. The latest registration figures are currently worryingly high, but we will see ..........time will tell.
Earlier, the suggestion was also made that Dutch universities have enormous financial reserves. This is a distorted picture of the actual disposable equity to be able to absorb the growth of student numbers. Moreover, this picture varies greatly per university.

It is short-sighted to constantly consider all universities as equal. Always referring to claims:
• that there is too much money,
• that nothing is done about the workload of the employees,
• that accessibility to academic education is insufficiently facilitated,
• that there is empathy for the increasing stress among students,
• that internationalization would be a revenue model for universities, and so on, and so on.

That is a lack of acknowledgement of the excellent position of the Dutch universities. One would do justice to the individual universities by actually helping them instead of lecturing them.

We have made an extra budget of €12 million available for 2019 to recruit the top candidates that we want. Because recruiting staff has become a top priority.

In the future, competition between continents, between countries and between regions will no longer involve raw materials or means of production, but the availability of suitable, talented people.
Imagine!
Over the next 10 years, the Brainport region will have to fill approximately 120,000 high-tech vacancies.

TU/e itself will have to fill 70 vacancies within the academic staff this year.
That is nothing compared to ASML.
They will have about 4,000 vacancies in 2019!
**The battle for talent has really started.**
**It is taking place at our doorstep!**

4. **Looking ahead: the year 2019**
We have to do it on our own in 2019.
In addition to the aforementioned limitations in the university landscape, we will focus on:

- Sector plans Beta and Technology and our six CRTs
- Open Science and Plan S
- Changing of the guard at the Executive Board
- Our services that provide even more and better support to the primary process of education and research
- Giving priority to personnel policy
- The NVAO institution test in 2019
- The move to the main building, Atlas, and its official opening
- Making the next MomenTUm day a success
- Trying to increase our financial scope by fundraising
- And last, but not least, acquiring substantial academic and scientific recognition.
Quite a to-do list, but the most important thing is the recruitment of staff. **I repeat, the most important thing is the recruitment of personnel.**

I am confident that we, with or without support from The Hague, will be able to make 2019 a wonderful year. Someone recently said that TU/e was a promising university a few years ago. Now it is a successful university. In the future we will make it a leading European university.

All the ingredients to make this possible are present. Financially healthy, growing in many ways, better positioned, increasing recognition and more media attention, with passionate staff, both academic and support, with a talented, diverse student population, with modern facilities and buildings at a top campus, and with fresh impetus in a new Executive Board.

**TU/e is a place where we educate students and where we push boundaries in science and technology for the well-being of people.**

The engineer of the future studies one or possibly two disciplines in depth, and works in multidisciplinary teams.

Some will serve the world with their specialization at super-high-tech companies, such as ASML.
But it is my deepest belief that the *leaders of the future*, hopefully with a more technical background than now, must have a broader mindset that also includes knowledge and understanding for social sciences and humanities.

With all these prospective challenges and opportunities, there is no better place for me to start the new year and finish my career this spring than at this university, a breeding ground for talent.

I wish you all a wonderful year!

Houdoe en bedankt!